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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**SHERIFF JOHN E. MILLER & THE MICHIGAN SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION**  
**PHONE SCAM CONSUMER ALERT**

Bay City, Bay County residents should be aware of a phone scam which originated on the West Coast, which could leave you with high phone bills. It starts when scammers call you pretending to be with your local police department, the Sheriff's Office, other public safety agency or hospital. They make up a story about your child or other loved one being hurt in an accident and ask you to call the officer "at the scene" by dialing \*72 and a phone number they provide. Sheriff Miller warns area residents not to do this! Bay County Sheriff deputies will never instruct anyone to dial a phone number beginning with \*72 to receive "on scene" accident information about their loved ones," said Sheriff Miller.

When you dial \*72 at the beginning of a call you can activate call forwarding, if you subscribe to it. All calls to your phone number will then be forwarded to the phone number the scammers gave you. When this happens, you may be billed a charge each time a call is forwarded to the other number. You may also be billed long distance charges, pay-per-call charges and collect call charges, if applicable. All calls will continue to be forwarded until this feature is turned off. (In most cases \*73 stops call forwarded but it can vary from carrier to carrier.)

You may have call forwarding as a feature of your landline or wireless service. If you are unsure if you have it, ask your phone company. Not all call forwarding is activated by \*72. If you have call forwarding Sheriff Miller suggests you find out how to use it, as well as all your other services so that you can avoid becoming a victim of this type of scam.

If this does happen to you, call your phone company to dispute the charges. They may advise you to file a police report and/or contact the Attorney General's complaint line. For more safety tips Sheriff Miller encourages residents to visit the Michigan Sheriffs' Association website at [www.misheriff.org](http://www.misheriff.org) where you can sign up to receive monthly newsletters. Founded in 1877 the Michigan Sheriffs' Association is the oldest law enforcement organization in Michigan.

*Public Safety Depends On You!*

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